

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 AMMAN 06186

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

U.S. DEL NO. 12

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L., JR.)
SUBJECT: ATHERTON MEETING WITH KING HUSSEIN - JULY 26

1. I CAME AWAY FEELING SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED BY MY MEETING WITH KING HUSSEIN TUESDAY. HE LISTENED MORE SERIOUSLY AND ADDRESSED THE ISSUES MORE THOUGHTFULLY THAN DURING MY LAST MEETING WITH HIM IN MARCH. THIS TIME I ONLY DETECTED ONCE THE "I'VE HEARD THIS ALL BEFORE" SMILE ON HIS FACE. HIS REPLY TO OUR KEY QUESTION AS TO WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THE KING REQUIRED TO FEEL JUSTIFIED IN BRINGING JORDAN INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS DID NOT GO BEYOND WHAT HE HAS TOLD US BEFORE, BUT HE DID AGREE TO REFLECT FURTHER ON THE QUESTION. IN ADDITION, I BELIEVE OUR WILLINGNESS TO FORESHADOW THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF OUR IDEAS FOR BRIDGING DIFFERENCES HAD EFFECT OF STRENGTHENING CREDIBILITY IN U.S. STRATEGY AND HAS ASSURED SOME MORE TIME FOR THE SADAT INITIATIVE AS FAR AS JORDAN'S ATTITUDE IS CONCERNED. THE KING INITIALLY EXPRESSED SOME OBJECTIONS TO OUR IDEAS BUT IN THE END, AFTER I REPEATED ONCE AGAIN WHAT WAS AT
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STAKE IN WASHINGTON'S EYES IN HAVING A MORE PRECISE READING OF WHAT HE NEEDED TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS, HE SAID HE WOULD REFLECT ON OUR IDEAS AND TRY TO HAVE JORDAN'S VIEWS READY BY THE TIME YOU CAME TO THE AREA. IN A SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH CHIEF OF ROYAL COURT (WHO ALSO ATTENDED THE MEETING WITH THE KING), WE WERE ABLE TO EXPLAIN MORE FULLY SEVERAL POINTS OF OUR IDEAS. I

LEFT WITH SHARAF A COPY OF OUR TALKING POINTS STRESSING, AS I HAD WITH SAUD, THE SENSITIVITY OF THE DOCUMENT AND THAT THIS WAS FOR THEIR INFORMATION ONLY. I BELIEVE HE AND KING WILL REFLECT ON OUR IDEAS.

2. I WENT THROUGH OUR TALKING POINTS CAREFULLY WITH KING. HE PAID CLOSE ATTENTION AND INTERRUPTED ONLY ONCE TO ASK IF JERUSALEM HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT LEEDS (I CONFIRMED IT HAD AND TOLD HIM THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT HAD COME UP). AT THE END OF THE TALKING POINTS I SAID I HAD A FEW FURTHER COMMENTS TO MAKE. WE RECOGNIZED THAT HE AS WELL AS OTHER ARABS WERE SKEPTICAL OF THE UTILITY OF CONTINUING THE PRESENT NEGOTIATING PROCESS. SOME INDEED WERE SAYING THE SADAT INITIATIVE WAS DEAD. THERE WAS A CONCEPT THAT THE AMERICAN PURPOSE IN STRESSING THE NEED FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN TO DEMONSTRATE THAT NO FURTHER PROGRESS WAS POSSIBLE, WHERE-UPON EVERYBODY WOULD GO HOME AND THE U.S. WOULD STEP IN WITH A PROPOSAL. I SAID THAT ON THE CONTRARY WE SAW OUR ROLE VERY MUCH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE. IT WAS INDEED THE SADAT INITIATIVE WHICH MADE THE KIND OF U.S. ROLE WE WERE DISCUSSING POSSIBLE.

3. I TOLD THE KING THAT I ALSO WANTED TO SAY A WORD ABOUT THE QUESTION OF WHERE JORDAN FITS INTO THE PICTURE. WE COULD NOT IMAGINE A SOLUTION TO THE ARAB-ISRAEL
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PROBLEM WITHOUT JORDAN. THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY THE KING HAD SUPPORTED MODERATION AND HAD BEEN COURAGEOUS IN HIS ADVOCACY OF MODERATION WHEN OTHERS IN THE ARAB WORLD WERE NOT. I TOLD HIM WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THE DIFFICULTIES HE FACES BUT THERE WAS FRANKLY SOME UNCERTAINTY IN WASHINGTON ABOUT JORDAN'S POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE PEACE PROCESS AND IN PARTICULAR ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH HE COULD JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS. WE WERE SEEKING HIS CONTINUED UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR FURTHER EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI TALKS. IT WOULD ALSO HELP US VERY MUCH IF HE COULD TELL US WHAT HE WOULD CONSIDER AN ADEQUATE BASIS FOR TAKING THE STEP OF JOINING NEGOTIATIONS. I KNEW THIS INVOLVED CONSIDERABLE RISKS FOR HIM, BUT WE WERE APPROACHING THE POINT WHERE IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO BEGIN TO CRYSTALLIZE THE ISSUES AND INTRODUCE GREATER PRECISION INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE SECRETARY'S NEXT VISIT WOULD BE OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE IN THIS RESPECT, AND IT WAS NECESSARY TO KNOW JORDAN'S POSITION AS PRECISELY AS POSSIBLE.

4. AFTER EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR MY PRESENTATION AND THE SECRETARY'S CONCERN TO KEEP HIM INFORMED, THE

KING SAID THE RECORDS SHOW THAT JORDAN HAD ALWAYS PURSUED THE GOAL OF PEACE IN THE AREA. THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT ISRAEL SHOULD BE PART OF THE AREA AND BE ABLE TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, BUT THE QUESTION OF RECIPROCAL RIGHTS HAD TO BE RECOGNIZED. A SOLUTION COULD NOT BE AT THE EXPENSE OF ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. HE WAS NOT SURE HE UNDERSTOOD WHY THERE WAS

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

UNCERTAINTY IN WASHINGTON ABOUT JORDAN'S POLICY. JORDAN HAD ALL ALONG BEEN VERY CLEAR ABOUT THE BASIS WHICH IT REQUIRED TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS. ISRAEL HAD TO COMMIT ITSELF TO A SOLUTION BASED ON RESOLUTION 242; THERE HAD TO BE WITHDRAWAL, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF MINOR AND RECIPROCAL MODIFICATIONS; ARAB SOVEREIGNTY HAD TO BE RESTORED IN THE FORMER ARAB SECTOR OF JERUSALEM; AND THERE HAD TO BE SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

5. THE KING SAID THAT IF THESE PRINCIPLES COULD BE ESTABLISHED THEN ANYTHING ELSE COULD BE DISCUSSED. HE SAID THAT FOR JORDAN A RADICALLY DIFFERENT SITUATION HAD EMERGED AFTER THE 73 WAR DURING THE ARAB SUMMIT WHICH CAME RIGHT AFTER THE FAILURE TO GET A DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT ON THE JORDANIAN FRONT. EVEN SO, JORDAN TODAY WOULD HAVE NO HESITATION IN APPROACHING OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO GET THEM TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS ABOUT THE JORDANIAN ROLE IN A SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IF THE ABOVE PRINCIPLES COULD BE ESTABLISHED.

6. THE KING SAID HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT GETTING

INVOLVED IN SOMETHING THAT WAS UNCLEAR IN ITS OBJECTIVE.
PRIOR TO THE SADAT VISIT TO JERUSALEM HE HAD THOUGHT
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THAT EVERYBODY WAS ON THE ROAD TO GENEVA. THERE
SEEMED TO BE A HOPE FOR A BREAKTHROUGH WITH THE SYRIANS
ON HOW THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED. SUDDENLY
EVERYTHING CHANGED AND FOR A TIME JORDAN WAS CAUGHT
UNAWARE BUT IN SPITE OF THIS JORDAN WAS TRYING TO MAKE
THE BEST OF THE NEW SITUATION, TRYING TO DRAW POSITIVE
ELEMENTS OUT OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE.

7. THE KING SAID HE THOUGHT JORDAN'S ROLE HAD BEEN
ENTIRELY POSITIVE. WHAT HE FRANKLY FOUND A LITTLE
"DISTRESSING" IS THAT HE KEEPS GETTING MESSAGES FROM
WASHINGTON REFLECTING DOUBTS ABOUT JORDAN'S ROLE AND
SUGGESTING THAT JORDAN WAS NOT DOING ENOUGH TO SUPPORT
SADAT. THE KING (A TRACE OF EMOTION APPEARING FOR THE
FIRST AND ONLY TIME FOR THE DAY) SAID THAT JORDAN'S
ATTACHMENT TO PEACE AND TO THE PROPOSITION THAT THERE
OUGHT TO BE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE
U.S. HAD BEEN CONSTANT SINCE THE 1950'S AND LONG ANTE-
DATED ANYONE ELSE IN THE ARAB WORLD. "YOU DON'T
NEED TO REMIND US CONSTANTLY OF WHAT WE SHOULD AND
SHOULD NOT DO." THE KING SAID HE WAS A LITTLE
PUZZLED ABOUT WHAT WASHINGTON WANTED HIM TO DO.
JORDAN COULD NOT ENTER INTO AN UNCLEAR SITUATION.

8. TURNING TO THE IDEAS THAT WE HAD PRESENTED, THE
KING SAID HE WONDERED HOW WE COULD BE THINKING OF A
FIVE-YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD? THE U.S. EFFORTS TO STOP
ISRAEL FROM BUILDING SETTLEMENTS HAD ONLY SUCCEEDED FOR
A TIME. WHAT WOULD BE THE SITUATION WE ALL FACED AFTER
FIVE YEARS IN THIS RESPECT?

9. THE KING SAID HE ALSO DIDN'T MUCH LIKE THE CONCEPT
OF JORDAN HAVING A "SPECIAL ROLE" ON THE WEST BANK IN
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THE CIRCUMSTANCES WE HAD OUTLINED. HE DID NOT WISH
JORDAN TO BE USED AS A "COVER" FOR CONTINUING ISRAELI
CONTROL OF THE AREA.

10. THE KING SAID JORDAN WAS PREPARED TO TAKE FULL RISKS
AND MAKE A MAJOR SACRIFICE IF NECESSARY. BUT IT
WANTED TO SEE CLEARLY WHAT THE SACRIFICE WOULD BE FOR.

AS HE SAW IT, ISRAEL'S MOTIVE WAS SIMPLY TO PLAY FOR TIME AND TRY TO CHANGE FACTS ON THE GROUND AS MUCH IN ITS FAVOR AS POSSIBLE. THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE. IF WE CONTINUED ON THIS PATH THERE WOULD BE A REAL GROWTH OF RADICAL FORCES IN THE AREA. THIS WOULD NOT JUST BE THE ARABS TRYING TO CHANGE THINGS BUT WOULD INVOLVE SOVIET ENCROACHMENTS AS WELL. WE HAD SEEN WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN AFGHANISTAN; IRAN WAS UNDER PRESSURE; THERE WERE THE ETHIOPIAN AND SOUTH YEMEN SITUATIONS; IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS WERE STILL ATTEMPTING TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE RESOURCES OF THE MIDDLE EAST. ISRAEL HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO CHANGE THE ARAB-ISRAELI STRUGGLE INTO AN EAST-WEST DISPUTE SO THAT THE PRESSURE WOULD BE LESS ON ISRAEL. WE COULD NOT AFFORD TO ALLOW THIS STRATEGY TO WORK.

11. I HAD EARLIER ASKED THE KING FOR ANY COMMENTS HE MIGHT WISH TO MAKE REGARDING CONTACTS HE HAD WITH THE OTHER ARABS RECENTLY, AND HE TURNED BRIEFLY TO THIS. HIS REMARKS FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE INFORMATION ABOUT HIS VIEWS WHICH HAVE BEEN TRANSMITTED IN ANOTHER CHANNEL. HE SAID SYRIA WAS STILL NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE SADAT INITIATIVE (OR JORDAN'S UNWILLINGNESS TO ATTACK IT) BUT THEY WERE NOT AS "UPTIGHT" ABOUT IT AS THEY HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY. THE KING THOUGHT THE SYRIANS WOULD READILY GO TO GENEVA IF THERE WERE A RENEWED OPPORTUNITY

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

FOR THIS. JORDAN-SYRIAN RELATIONS WERE MUCH BETTER AS A RESULT OF THE VISIT. HE HAD FOUND THE SYRIANS DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT THEIR DILEMMA IN LEBANON. HE HAD

RELATIVELY LITTLE TO SAY ABOUT HIS MEETINGS IN SAUDI ARABIA. HE HAD MADE A PITCH TO THE SAUDIS THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN SHOULD THINK OF THEIR COMBINED RESOURCES AS ONE IN TERMS OF MEETING THE INCREASED SECURITY THREAT IN THE AREA. HE SAID THE SAUDIS HAD REACTED POSITIVELY TO THIS IDEA. HE WAS FRANKLY A LITTLE CONFUSED ABOUT THE SAUDI ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PEACE PROCESS SAYING THAT HE HAD GOTTEN A DIFFERENT IMPRESSION FROM THE ONE THAT VICE PRESIDENT MUBARAK HAD GOTTEN IN HIS RECENT TRIP AS TO THE SAUDI ATTITUDE ABOUT AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE OR ABOUT SAUDI SUPPORT FOR A JORDANIAN AS OPPOSED TO A PLO ROLE IN THE WEST BANK.

12. AFTER THIS RATHER EXTENDED MONOLOGUE BY THE KING IN REPLY TO MINE, I TOLD HIM I WANTED TO MAKE A FEW COMMENTS. WE DEEPLY REGRETTED IT IF OUR MESSAGES HAD CONVEYED ANY DOUBTS ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JORDAN. THIS HAD CERTAINLY NOT BEEN OUR INTENTION. WE DO HAVE A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFICULTIES THAT JORDAN FACES. IF THERE HAD BEEN SUCH A NOTE IN OUR
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MESSAGE IT MAY HAVE BEEN A REFLECTION OF A FEELING OF IMPATIENCE IN WASHINGTON. WE DID FIND WE WERE AT A CRUCIAL POINT, THAT THE TASK WE WERE CALLED UPON TO PERFORM WAS DIFFICULT AND THAT WE NEEDED AS MUCH HELP AS POSSIBLE FROM ALL OUR FRIENDS IN THE AREA.

13. RETURNING TO THE JORDANIAN POSITION ON THE NEGOTIATIONS, I SAID THAT WE UNDERSTOOD HIS RELUCTANCE TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BASIS OF THE PRESENT NEBULOUS SITUATION. WE DON'T EXPECT JORDAN TO ENTER THE NEGOTIATIONS -- NOR INDEED WOULD WE EXPECT SADAT TO CONTINUE HIS INITIATIVE -- ON THE BASIS OF A REQUEST TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATING AND NOTHING FURTHER. ON THE OTHER HAND, I HAD TO BE FRANK IN SAYING THAT IN OUR JUDGMENT IT WAS SIMPLY NOT IN THE CARDS TO GET A FINAL RESOLUTION OF THE WEST BANK/GAZA/PALESTINIAN PROBLEM NOW. WHAT WE WERE IN EFFECT ASKING WAS WHETHER THERE WAS SOMETHING IN BETWEEN THESE TWO POINTS THAT WOULD BE SEEN BY THE KING AS A STARTING POINT FOR NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING JORDAN. I SAID THAT EVEN IF ALL THE ANSWERS COULD NOT BE PROVIDED AT THE PRESENT TIME, WE AGREED WITH HIM THAT THE DIRECTION IN WHICH WE WERE GOING HAD TO BE CLEAR, AND THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO SEE NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH HAD TO BE EQUALLY CLEAR.

14. I SAID THIS WAS THE QUESTION THE SECRETARY ASKED ME TO LEAVE WITH THE KING BECAUSE, AS HE WOULD APPRECIATE, IT WAS HIGHLY IMPORTANT FOR THE SECRETARY

TO KNOW WHAT JORDAN'S POSITION IS WITH CONSIDERABLE PRECISION AS HE GOES INTO THE NEXT CRUCIAL ROUND OF TALKS.

15. AFTERWARDS, IN A PRIVATE TALK WITH SHARAF,
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I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ABOUT THE KING'S CONCERN ABOUT ISRAEL CONTINUING ITS SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD. I SAID THAT UNDER OUR CONCEPT THIS WOULD BE A SUBJECT THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE TRANSITIONAL REGIME -- IN OTHER WORDS, WE WERE NOT SAYING THE ARABS HAD TO ACCEPT WHAT IS NOW THE ISRAELI POSITION ON THE MATTER; THEY WOULD BE A PARTY TO THOSE NEGOTIATIONS.

16. SHARAF ALSO ASKED WHETHER HE TOOK OUR IDEAS TO MEAN THAT WE ENVISAGED AGREEMENT BEING REACHED IN TWO PHASES. I SAID I THOUGHT IT WAS MORE LIKE THREE PHASES: (1) AGREEMENT BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL ON A SET OF BROAD PRINCIPLES WHICH WOULD ENABLE JORDAN TO ENTER THE NEGOTIATIONS; (2) JORDANIAN-ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT ON THE MORE DETAILED TERMS FOR A TRANSITIONAL REGIME INCLUDING THE MANNER IN WHICH PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE ELECTED; AND (3) THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL, JORDAN, EGYPT AND THE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES FOR A FINAL PEACE TREATY. WE ALSO CLARIFIED FOR SHARAF THAT, IN OUR THINKING, ISRAELIS AND ARABS WOULD UNDERTAKE PRIOR TO FIVE-YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD TO DETERMINE ULTIMATE QUESTION OF STATUS OF WEST BANK AT THE END OF THE PERIOD IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 242 AND THAT THEREFORE COMMITMENT TO DETERMINE ULTIMATE STATUS OF WEST BANK/GAZA WOULD NOT BE LEFT DANGLING. SHARAF ASKED HOW PLO AND NON-WEST BANK PALESTINIANS COULD JOIN PROCESS AND WHETHER THE LAST MIGHT BE AT GENEVA AND WHETHER SYRIA WOULD JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THAT POINT, WHICH JORDAN THOUGHT WOULD BE VERY DESIRABLE. ON LATTER POINT I SAID THIS INDEED MIGHT

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

HAPPEN AND WE WOULD OF COURSE WELCOME IT AS WE HAD, AS HE KNEW, ALWAYS SUPPORTED A FULLY COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AS THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE. SO FAR AS PARTICIPATION OF NON-WEST BANK PALESTINIANS WAS CONCERNED, I SAID WE RECOGNIZED THIS QUESTION WOULD ARISE AT SOME POINT AND HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH IN NEGOTIATIONS, BUT IN OUR VIEW IT WAS BEST TO LIMIT PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AT OUTSET TO WEST BANK/GAZA REPRESENTATIVES. QUESTION OF WHAT EXPATRIATE PALESTINIANS SHOULD RETURN UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES COULD BE CONSIDERED BY NEGOTIATING PARTIES AT LATER DATE. AS FOR PLO, ITS POSITION TOWARD ISRAEL REMAINED AN INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE. IF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS LATER INDICATED DESIRE TO JOIN NEGOTIATIONS ON BASIS RESOLUTION 242 AND BREAK WITH EXTREMISTS, THIS WOULD CREATE NEW SITUATION. SHARAF SAID THIS QUESTION COULD NOT BE AVOIDED SINCE OTHERWISE IT COULD BLOW UP ENTIRE EFFORT.

17. FINALLY, I WENT OVER AT SOME LENGTH WITH SHARAF ALL THE REASONS WHY WE BELIEVE CONTINUATION OF DIRECT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS IS ESSENTIAL.

18. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TEL AVIV, CAIRO AND JIDDA.

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